

## Message Text

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44

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 PC-01 EUR-09 NIC-01 CU-03 HEW-01

SIL-01 LAB-01 OMB-01 CIEP-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03

H-01 INR-09 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-14 USIA-04 DRC-01 /081 W

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R 071215Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4434

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 6452

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, BL

SUBJECT: GOB CLOSES SCHOOLS FOR THE YEAR IN RESPONSE TO  
TEACHER STRIKE

1. SCHOOLS WERE CLOSED NATIONWIDE BY GOB DECREE. STUDENTS WITH SOME EXCEPTIONS ARE AUTOMATICALLY PROMOTED TO THE NEXT HIGHER GRADE. HIGHER EDUCATION SUCH AS THE UNIVERSITIES AND NORMAL SCHOOLS ARE NOT AFFECTED. SPOKESMEN FOR THE GOB STATED THAT THE CLOSING WAS DUE TO THE INTRANSIGENCE OF STRIKING LA PAZ TEACHERS AND THAT THE TEACHERS STRIKE WAS INITIATED AND MAINTAINED WITH POLITICAL AND SUBVERSIVE INTENT.

2. THE RANK AND FILE COMMITTEE REPRESENTING STRIKING TEACHERS CALLED A MEETING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LA PAZ FOR THE MORNING OF OCTOBER 4 IN COLLABORATION WITH ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTING STUDENTS OF THE UMSA, THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY, THE NORMAL SCHOOL AND THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS. POLICE BROKE UP THE ASSEMBLY WITH TEAR GAS. 300 DEMONSTRATORS WERE REPORTEDLY ARRESTED AND 3 INJURED BY GUN FIRE.

3. THE MINERS FEDERATION CALLED AT 24 HOUR STRIKE ON SATURDAY OCTOBER 5 TO PROTECT THE CLOSING OF THE SCHOOLS. THE MINERS  
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ALSO APPEALED TO THE MINISTER OF MINES TO SEEK EXEMPTION

FOR COMIBOL SCHOOLS SO THAT THEY MIGHT REMAIN OPEN UNTIL THE NORMAL END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR (APPROXIMATELY MID-NOVEMBER).

4. COMMENT: THE GOB DECISION WAS PROMPTED BY THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LA PAZ TEACHERS STRIKE, THE FAILURE OF RECENT HARD LINE TACTICS TO WEAKEN THE STRIKE AND THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE STRIKE MIGHT SPREAD TO TEACHERS IN OTHER AREAS BOTH URBAN AND RURAL. WITH THE SCHOOLS CLOSED THE TEACHERS ABILITY TO PRESSURE THE GOVERNMENT IS REDUCED SIGNIFICANTLY. SYMPATHY STRIKES BY UNIONS FRIENDLY TO THE TEACHERS SUCH AS THAT OF THE MINERS ARE POSSIBLE. STUDENT AND TEACHER ASSEMBLIES AND STREET DEMONSTRATIONS OFFER ANOTHER TOOL FOR PRESSURING THE GOB. WHILE TEACHERS MIGHT NOT CONFRONT POLICE IN THE STREETS, THEIR STUDENT ALLIES MIGHT AND RESULTING CLASHES COULD CONTRIBUTE TO INCREASING PUBLIC TENSION.  
STEDMAN

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, TEACHERS, LABOR STRIKES, SCHOOLS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 07 OCT 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** elyme  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1974LAPAZ06452  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D740283-0949  
**From:** LA PAZ  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Line Count:** 79  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION ARA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** elyme  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 09 SEP 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <09 SEP 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <03 MAR 2003 by elyme>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** GOB CLOSES SCHOOLS FOR THE YEAR IN RESPONSE TO TEACHER STRIKE  
**TAGS:** ELAB, PINT, PINS, BL  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005